

# *The Playhouse (NB) Architectural Report, Block 29 Building 17A Lot 163-164-169*

*Originally entitled: "Report on the First Theatre Williamsburg, Virginia 1716-1745"*

Perry, Shaw and Hepburn

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## *REPORT ON THE FIRST THEATRE WILLIAMSBURG, VIRGINIA 1716-1745*

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Williamsburg, Virginia

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## Foundations.

The accompanying archaeological plan is made from the foundations excavated on Colonial lot number 164, which is part of the present Coleman Tucker lot. This lot 164 lies on Palace Green.

These foundations have been established by the Research Department as the foundations of the First Theatre in Williamsburg. (See letter from P. S. & H., Boston, to Research Department, Williamsburg, dated February 3, 1932. This letter discusses the evidence that connects the theatre with these foundations.)

One of the theories advanced in the above letter, which is that the central portion of the Tucker House has the frame of the First Theatre incorporated in it, has been adopted in this Restoration. Taking this frame and these foundations as a starting point, the Restoration drawings have been made.

The interpretation of the walls of these foundations as shown on the archaeological drawing is as follows:

The walls 9" thick marked 11, 12, 13, on the archaeological plan have been assumed to be the foundation walls of the stage. Wall 13 has been restored to match wall 20, on the opposite side. Walls 19, 20, 21, have been restored as the walls of a narrow stair leading from the stage to the space under the stage. These stairs are but 21 inches wide and while quite narrow, are possible for this purpose. This area formed by walls 19, 20, 21, forms an excellent foundation for an entry to the apron and if it were balanced by a like area on the opposite side, would be the logical place to put the left proscenium doors. (See later chapter on Proscenium doors.) This lack of symmetry in the foundations has caused the abandonment of this attractive possibility. No theatre that has been found in our research seems to have a real proscenium door on one side and a false one on the other and it is highly improbable that with all the land that was available such a falsity would have been employed.

The slanting portion of wall 14 has been restored as a pier supporting the sloping wall carrying the Proscenium door. The pier on the opposite side is presumed to have been destroyed and has here been restored. These piers are joined to wall 13 restored and wall 20 restored by a segmental arch. The remainder of wall 14, which has been accounted for in no other way, was here restored as the foundation for a platform by which the actors mount the trap door machine. This restoration is fanciful and has no evidence to back it other than the actual presence of this bit of wall.

Wall 3 is assumed to be a retaining wall for the unexcavated portion under the stage and not a bearing wall although it marks the end of the frame of the auditorium. There is a difference of 3.96 ft. ie, from Grade 75.57 to Grade 79.53 between the basement floor and the floor beneath the stage, which is retained by this wall 3.

Walls 1, 2 and 4 are the walls of the auditorium. The basement under the auditorium has its floor established at Grade 75.44 and 75.57. Allowing for head room, this establishes the floor of the pit at about Grade 84.57. The Grade outside the building in Colonial days was about 79.60, as established by the brick paving found in this area. The floor of the pit was thus 4.97 feet from the natural grade at that period.

Walls 5 and 6 divide the basement into three rooms. The North room is entered by a bulkhead numbered 8. This room has a curious floor drain and a sump pit outside wall 2, and it is assumed that it was a refreshment room. It has been restored as such with a bar running across its southern end. All the basement beneath the auditorium has a brick paved floor. The middle room formed by walls 5 and 6 was probably the back room for the bar or a part of the dressing room. It is connected with both the north and the south room by openings five feet wide lying directly opposite each other. The south room, formed by walls 2, 3, 4 and 6, is assumed to have contained the dressing rooms.

This room is reached from the outside by a bulkhead which has been restored at C, and by a flight of stairs from the space beneath stage. There is no authority for these stairs - they are assumed as a practical necessity.

Wall 10 has been restored as the foundation for the steps leading to the gallery. As this foundation is not balanced by any other

piece of wall, this is a very probable use for it.

No foundations have been found for the platform to the box and pit doors. These piers have been added.

## Auditorium

The frame of the auditorium is assumed to be the frame of the central portion of the Tucker House. (See letter of February 3, 1932, P. S. & H., Boston, to Research & Record Department, Williamsburg.) The upper windows are the windows of the Tucker house. These windows are assumed to have been in the original Theatre (see photostat of the interior of the John Street Theatre, New York. See advertisement in the *Virginia Gazette*, December 19, 1745. "five large windows." This advertisement is for work to be done and these five new windows, together with the six that are assumed to have been in the Theatre, would have made this into a conventional two story house.)

The gallery door has been placed where a door occurs in the second floor of the Tucker House.

There is no authority for the placing of the Pit and Box doors, other than the fact that they center on the windows or door above, and enter the building at the most logical place (see accompanying photostats for the grouping of theatre doors around the end of the auditorium and for doors at differing levels.)

The auditorium has been divided in spite of its size, which is really very small, into the conventional Box, Pit and Gallery. These have been kept as simple as possible. This division of the audience was followed in practically all play houses both in England and America. (See early handbills, John St., N.Y. Pit, Boxes and Gallery. Hallam or Second Theatre, Williamsburg Pit, Boxes, Balcony, Gallery. Dock Street Theatre, Charleston, S.C. Boxes, Pit, Gallery; Annapolis Theatre, Box, Pit, Gallery. Nassau St., New York, Pit, Gallery, early-later, Pit, Box & Gallery. English Theatres, with the exception of the Drury Lane, Liverpool, and a few others, have Pit, Gallery and Boxes.)

All contemporary theatres had pits and galleries. A few had no boxes but the majority had these three major divisions. The caste system was so firmly established in Virginia society at that time that its rigidity has been the final argument for boxes, even if of the simplest sort, in this restricted house.

### Boxes.

The boxes have been restored as a row of seats down the side wall. They have been divided from the pit by a paneled rail, the top of which is about 3'10" to 4' above the floor of the pit. (See photostat of the John St. Theatre, for this arrangement.) This is the arrangement of the Hall of Burgesses in the Capitol. The wall has been wainscoted three feet high behind this bench with matched boarding. (See *Journal of the House of Burgesses of Virginia*. 1702, 1712, p. 29, 30, April 9, 1703.)

The line of the gallery above, which is set to clear the door and window frames, establishes the line of the rear boxes. These boxes are divided to allow a passage to the pit. This division is necessary because inside stairs from the ground to the first floor are not characteristic of Williamsburg architecture and are not possible here without interfering with the rooms below.

The extreme narrowness of the auditorium prevents the floor of the boxes being brought up to the level of the stage. If they were brought to this level their rails would cut off the view of the end three feet on both sides of the stage. For this reason the top of the box rail has been kept just above the floor of the stage and the floor of the boxes two feet above the floor of the pit. There is no division of the benches into different box areas as the means of access is too limited.

### Pit.

The pit, after the boxes have been taken out of the auditorium, is but eleven feet wide. This may be arranged with an aisle down one side or with a narrow aisle down both sides. In one case it would seat six people to a row; in the other, seven. Numbered seats were unknown (See Seilhamer, *History of the American Theatre*, p. 9; Litigation over the over-selling of tickets to the Nassau Street Theatre, N.Y.) As many people were crowded on a bench as their respective widths would allow. These benches were wood without backs (see photostats accompanying. Backs had been introduced by the time the drawing was made of the John Street Theatre, N. Y.) The floor of the pit has not been sloped because it is considered unnecessary in a house of this size and not in the spirit of the simple construction used here.

The pit was occupied by the intelligentsia and the lesser gentry. The great planters who formed the self-constituted nobility of the colony occupied the boxes. The gallery was for servants, students, etc.

### Gallery.

It would be impossible in a house of this width to run the gallery down the sides as was customary in most theatres of this period. The only possible arrangement is to put the gallery across the end. (See photostat of an end gallery in a very simple theatre of 1789 -- this photostat is from an engraving in the Theatre Collection, Harvard College Library.) This gallery has been restored without

seats. (Hornblow *"History of the Theatre in America"* p. 84 - "No seats in gallery.")

## **Stage.**

The apron or fore stage has been set to line with wall 21 of the foundations. There is no authority for this. Eight feet from the proscenium arch to the front of the apron seemed barely enough and it may be that it should extend further into the pit. (For the use of the apron as the main acting space, refer to Nicoll *"Restoration Drama"* and *"Development of the Theatre."* Lawrence, *"Physical Conditions of the Elizabethan Playhouse"*, *"Elizabethan Playhouse and Other Studies,"* Odell, *"Shakespeare from Betterton to Irving."*) This apron is entered by two flanking doors. (See above authors and accompanying photostats.) These doors were used by the actors for entries and exits, were equipped with locks and knockers and had a balcony over each. (See photostats, Lawrence, *"Physical Conditions of the Elizabethan Stage."*) The angle of these doors with the side walls is greater than in contemporary English theatres and seems to go back to post Elizabethan theatres for precedent. The angle is set off by the foundation wall 14. These doors at this angle in a house of this width leave a space of but 10 feet for the proscenium arch. This establishes a curious effect. It gives as a result, a theatre that is a transition between the theatres of Inigo Jones, which had the central opening no more than a triumphal arch, and the full blown Restoration theatres which were contemporary with this house (1716). The size of the house may have forced this fact but it seems intentional, for if it were not, the stage could have been placed on center with the auditorium and the proscenium doors could have been placed where the stairs to the stage now are, and in a similar area on the opposite side.

Across the front of the stage has been placed a row of iron spikes. (See Tyler, *"Williamsburg, The Old Colonial Capitol"* page 230, for mention of spikes in the Hallam Theatre. See photostats.)

Back of these spikes have been placed six lamps for footlights. These lamps are open flamed with either one or two flames each. (For these lamps see photostat of the Red Bull Theatre. See Hornblow *"History of Theatre in America"* page 46, "6 wax lights." See article by W. J. Lawrence, "A Fallacy Concerning Footlights.")

The boards of the stage have been restored to run perpendicular to the proscenium arch (see photostats.)

A trap door has been placed just back of the proscenium arch. (See Lawrence, *"Elizabethan Playhouse and Other Studies,"* and *"Physical Conditions of the Elizabethan Play house."* See also photostat.) This trapdoor has been designed to operate by a machine constructed after the manner of Inigo Jones' machine for the Gods. (see photostat.) There is further material available on the construction of these machines. This material should be consulted before the design of this trapdoor machine is definitely settled. That the theatres of this period were equipped with trap doors is a very well established fact.

The proscenium arch has been located as described above. This was done from the angle of the foundation, the necessary width of the proscenium doors and the width of the house itself, in the same manner as has been described on the preceding page. Its architectural type is taken from contemporary architecture in Virginia. It has been suggested somewhat by the Chestnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia, which is of course, a much later house. (See photostat, Chestnut Street Theatre interiors.)

Over the proscenium doors are balcony windows. (These windows are established by the same authorities as quoted above for the proscenium doors.) Each window has a balcony arranged before it and in order to keep the architecture of the Playhouse as simple as possible these are made without balusters and should be hung with cloth (see photostat of crude theatre from a drawing by T. Wright, 1789.) The balcony on the left of the spectator as he faces the stage is reached by a continuation of the stairs from below stage. The balcony on the right is reached a ladder due to the lack of space for a more elaborate means of access.

The balcony windows have been restored without sash and hung with curtains. Those windows were used by the actors whenever the play called for a balcony scene or for persons appearing at an upper story window. They are descendants of the upper stage in the Elizabethan Play House. They can be accepted as an absolute requirement of all theatres from the Restoration to about 1800. They were not, however, used in houses devoted to Italian Opera. Occasionally it seems as if the musicians occupied space behind these windows but the space in the theatre here restored is too limited for this purpose.

Some form of ornament has been placed over the center of the proscenium arch. This might be almost anything - a bird in clouds, (Chestnut St. Theatre), the governor's arms (the theatre operated under a patent from the governor), or some other type of decorative spot. The only device that is impossible is the use of the Royal Arms, whose use was confined to certain so-called Royal Theatres.

The curtain is of the type that divides in the middle and is pulled up on the sides. (Nicoll, *"Restoration Drama"* page 54, "curtain drawn". W. J. Lawrence, *"Elizabethan Playhouse and Other Studies."* "There is some reason to believe that the double curtains pulling up on either side were first employed in English scenic art and that the principle obtained until at least the second decade of the 18th century.") This curtain of green cloth should be made of a material that was common in 1716. (Hornblow, *"History of the Theatre in America"*, page 46 "green curtain suspended from the ceiling." Odell, *"Annals of the New York Stage"*, Vol. I, page 58, "A large green curtain....." Broadbent, *"Annals of the Liverpool Stage"* - "old green curtains." )

This curtain is to be raised on the blast of a whistle if the New York custom may be used here (see Odell, *"Annals of the New York Stage"*, page 58 "...when on a blast of a whistle it was raised..." It is the custom in some of the French theatres to give three blows

with a hammer back stage as the signal for the raising of the curtain and it seems as if some such quaint custom should be adopted for this theatre. The curtain is not drawn between scenes but opened at the beginning of the play and closed at the end. (Odell, *"Shakespeare from Betterton to Irving"* page 127.)

During the playing of tragedy the stage is to be covered by a green baize carpet, probably a development of the custom of strewing the Elizabethan stage with rushes - (see Odell, *"Shakespeare from Betterton to Irving"*, page 125-"the solemn custom of never playing tragedy at any theatre save on a green baize carpet."

The use of scenery in theatres of this period is well established. Its adoption was the reason for the change in type of theatre that marks the difference between Elizabethan and Restoration stages. Its operation as flats pulling out from the sides is also well established. (See photostats of Inigo Jones, sets for Whitehall, Webb's sets for Whitehall, a section of a theatre by Wren. See also Odell, *"Annals of the New York Stage"* Vol. I, page 140 -"probably used as flats which were pulled to one side when changed." This is in the course of remarks on the Hallam Theatre, Williamsburg.) These scenes operated in some cases in grooves in the floor but the means of holding them at the top has not yet been determined. It may have been that the last scene was braced and the preceding scenes leaned against it. Some form of hanging scene was used for clouds or ceiling. (see photostats.) None of the sections of theatre that we have seen has had enough height to allow scenes to be hoisted out of sight; in most of them there is hardly enough to allow these clouds or ceiling drops to be raised out of sight. This type of scenery and this low ceiling over the stage has been followed in this restoration. Scenery of this date was pictorial and illustrative rather than realistic or illusionary. This can easily be seen from descriptions of sets used at this time; battles were painted sometimes in the distance and even painted figures of men on the scenes were used.

### ***Lighting.***

The stage in this restoration has been lighted by two candelabra hanging over the apron. These candelabra are either of the branched type or of the ring type. (See photostats.) In addition to these candelabra, footlights were used. (See proceeding chapter for the authorities for these footlights.) It has been assumed that so complicated a device as the float, which allowed these lamps to be lowered beneath the stage, was not used here. There is some doubt as to its use in England in 1716 and even if the great theatres of London were using it at this time it seems an improbable device for so simple a theatre as this. A servant walked out on the stage in full view of the audience to trim, snuff or replace any candle or lamp that seemed to need attention. A further degree of illumination was given by candles hanging back stage between the shutters of the scenes. (See photostat of a drawing by T. Wright, 1789. See also shadows in Inigo Jones' drawings of sets which could only have been cast from lights in this position.) The auditorium may be sufficiently lighted by the two great candelabra over the stage. This will have to be determined by experiment in the house itself. There is authority for bracket lights around the walls and across the front of the gallery, although in a small house there is equally good authority for leaving them out. (See photostats of theatre interiors.)

### ***Heating.***

That there was no heat in the building seems very well established by, the lack of chimney foundations. These foundations are absolutely necessary to the heating of Virginia buildings during this period as fireplaces were used exclusively. Stoves, if invented, had not come into use in Virginia in 1716. (See *Journal of the House of Burgesses* for the Capitol specifications. They describe a building without heating apparatus.) The audience probably used footwarmers. (See Hornblow - *"History of the Theatre in America"*. "Notice to people to bring their own footwarmers." This is in New York.)

### ***Pictures.***

There is a possibility that engravings of various actors were hung along the walls behind the boxes. (See Thaler. *"From Shakespeare to Sheridan"*, page 217, quoting from the London Spy, 1699, speaking of a closed play house, "should get in and steal away the poet's pictures and sell 'em to some upholsterers for Roman Emperors.")

### ***Exterior of the Theatre.***

The frame of the Tucker House has been used for the auditorium. This frame has determined the height of the cornice above the brickwork of the foundation. It also determined the slope of the roof, the spacing of the windows, and the handling of the cornice.

The porches for the doorways are perhaps a little too late in date and it may be that those should be abandoned.

The outside stairs to the gallery are an absolute necessity. Not only are they the most probable means of access to this level, due to their prevalence in Virginia Colonial architecture, but are the only possible solution of the stair problem due to the extremely limited space in the auditorium.

The design of the stage end of the building results from the necessary requirements for head room in the stage balconies. The shed seemed the most natural means of refining this space. It is a very customary method of roofing enlargements of the almost standard building units used by the Colonial builders. (See Photostats of early republican insurance policies.) The hiping of the shed roof

was necessary because the stage is wider than the auditorium and the hip prevented bad projecting corners where the shed met the auditorium roof.

The cupola has been adopted for this building as it was found on a number of old theatres and seems to mark this building as of special character. (See photostat of the Southwark Theatre, Philadelphia, 1759. See Portsmouth Theatre.)

### **Paint.**

Hornblow, in his " *History of the American Theatre* " states that these early theatres were invariably painted red but, as he does not give his authority for this statement, it will be necessary to investigate its authenticity before it is adopted as a proven fact.

### **Grounds.**

The area around the theatre was paved with brick (see archaeological plan for indications of this paving still remaining.) On this group of lots and run by the same management was a bowling green.

### **Conclusion.**

Charles Stagg and Mary, his wife, who were indentured to William Levingston in 1715, to teach dancing, were released from their indentures in 1716, to become his partners in the theatrical venture from which this play house resulted. (See original contract from the York County Records, Orders, Wills, etc. Book 15, page 53, Nov. 19, 1716. A copy of this contract is here attached.) They seem to have been professional actors and while their history is unknown, it seems hardly possible that they received their training anywhere but in England. The Play House that they built here was an interpretation by Virginia carpenters of the knowledge that the Staggs had of English theatres. The restoration shown on these drawings and described above is an attempt to present such a building. It is a building containing as many of the elements of the English theatres as might have seemed essential to these early builders. It has been restored in a manner as consistent as possible with architecture peculiar to the locality.

February 3, 1932

Block 15

Mr. Harold R. Shurtleff

Williamsburg, Virginia

My dear Mr. Shurtleff:

Mr. Hepburn has asked me to present to you the following theory and have it checked by those in the office who are thoroughly familiar with the old framing of the Tucker House. Mrs. Bullock and Mr. Shaw at least, and others perhaps, have long had the theory that the Old Theatre is incorporated in the Tucker House. At last I believe that we have some proof of this and if it be true, the framing of the central portion of the Tucker House should give us the arrangement of the entrances to the Old Theatre.

To briefly recall the history of the old theatre building:

- Built c. 1716, Wm. Levingston, Y.C.R.
- Mortgage foreclosed c. 1723 by Archibald Blair, Y.C.R.
- Archibald Blair, John Blair, ex. to Gilmer, 1735, Y.C.R.
- Gilmer to Subscribers c. 1735 to 1745, Y.C.R.
- Subscribers to City, 1745, Y.C.R.
- Altered 1745, by City, *Virginia Gazette*

Then we have several notices which say "where the Court House "now is" or "now stands."

- Gilmer to Tarply and Knox, 1759, Y.C.R. "excepting Court House.....is built upon."
- Knox to Taswell, 1764, Y.C.R. "excepting.....Court House.....is built upon"
- *Virginia Gazette* , March 16, 1769. "Disposed of present Court House and the ground on which the same stands."

You will note, after this date, 1769, a change in the grammar. Before this date the Court House or Play House "is" or "stands." After this date you will notice that the Court House or Play House "was" or "stood." This indicates some change in its physical condition; either it disappeared after 1769, or it was altered into a residence. Evidence in favor of the latter theory is to be found in the following quotations.

- City to John Taswell, August, 1772, Y.C.R. "...George Gilmer.....conveys the play house and the ground whereon it stands...."  
"The said city conveys to John Taswell.....play house aforesaid stood with six feet of ground adjoining the said play house on every side."

If you will read the original of this deed you will note a strange change in the tense of the word stand, which seems to indicate some change in the building.



- John Taswell to Henry Taswell, Sept. 1, 1779, Y.C.R."except such part.....Court House stood on.""court house of said city stood."
- The next date we have is Sept. 14, 1782, *Va. Gazette* ."To be sold.....dwelling house with four rooms on the lower and three on the upper floor."

You will see from this last dated record and from your knowledge of the lot that there is no foundation on the lot or spot on the Frenchman's map big enough to take such a house with the exception of the Tucker House (which we know to be non-extant in 1786 by the Frenchman's map) or the supposed theatre site.

The theories are possible-

- First - The Play House did not disappear but was altered so completely that it lost its identity as a land mark and therefore began to be referred to in the past tense. This happened between 1769 and 1772. You will also note in support of this theory, that the *Court House* was transferred to John Taswell in 1772 for 50 pounds, which is the same amount that the city paid Gilmer for this building in 1745.
- Second - The Play House was destroyed between 1769 and 1772 and Taswell built a house on its foundations before 1782. This house was later moved to the Tucker site.
- Third - The Play House stood on the Tucker site and disappeared between 1769 and 1772 which accounts for the blank space on the Frenchman's map and makes the building shown thereon a residence which it doubtless was, in 1782.

I prefer at present to hold the first of the theories; i.e., it was changed to a residence between 1769 and 1772; advertised as such in 1782 and moved to the Tucker site between 1786 and 1796 (the Frenchman's map for the first date; the insurance policy for the second.) A strange coincidence exists at present on the site. The main heavy bearing wall of the so-called theatre foundation would support the central portion of the Tucker House. You will note that its dimension of 18 x 40 and the size of the central portion of the Tucker House, leaving off the shed in the rear.

I have heard that the framing of this portion of the Tucker House is very old but I would like for you to find out if anyone there knows enough about the framing to tell us whether the ends of this central block are later than the front and back, whether there is any evidence of the alteration of 1745 and of 1769-1772; whether the framing might have been altered to receive one of the chimneys; whether there was evidence of one of the second floor windows having been a door, together with any other peculiarities of the frame that might exist.

If this be the old frame, there should be enough evidence in it to make this one of our most authentic restorations. Let us hope that it is. I do not wish, however, to attack this problem with any preconceived notion of the whereabouts or of the appearance of the theatre and would be obliged to you if you would submit all of these theories to the most searching criticism by anyone who might have some knowledge of the subject.

Yours very sincerely,

RCD:AM

Orders, Wills, etc.-Book 15

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Levingston  
from Stagg

Articles of Agreement Indented, concluded and made ye eleventh day of July in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and sixteen Between William Levingston of ye County of New Kent Merchant of ye one part and Chas. Stagg of ye same County Dancing Master & Mary his wife by two several indentures bearing date ye 23 and 24 days of September, 1715, were bound to ye said William Levingston to serve him in ye Colony of Virginia in ye Arts, Professions and for ye time in ye sd Indentures mentioned and ye sd Chas. Stagg for his advancement and greater profit requested for himself and his wife to be free of ye service mentioned in ye sd Indentures. These Presents Witnesseth that ye sd Wm Levingston hath released and acquitted and doth hereby release and acquit ye sd Chas. Stagg and Mary his wife of all service claims or demands which he ye sd Wm Levingston, was or is any ways instituted to by virtue of ye sd Indentures. And ye sd Wm Levingston doth further hereby assign and make over unto ye sd Charles Stagg all right, title or interest which he ye sd Levingston might claim in any sums of money or other perquisites or profits already due for ye sd Charles Staggs services in teaching or instructing any person or persons whatsoever in this countrey so as ye sd Charles Stagg shall & May have and enjoy to his own use and behoof as well the Entrance money as other ye profits arising from ye said scholars without ye Lett or interruption of ye sd Wm Levingstone. In consideration whereof ye sd Charles Stagg doth hereby covenant & agree & with ye sd Wm. Levingstone that he ye sd Charles Stagg his Exec or Admr shall and will well & truly satisfy & Pay unto ye sd Wm Levingstone or his assigns ye sum of Sixty pounds Currnt money yerly during ye space of Three years next ensuing ye date hereof (if ye sd Charles Stagg shall so long live) in manner and form following, that is to say Sixty Pounds currnt money being ye first payment at Lady day which shall be in ye year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and seventeen, Sixty

Pounds like money at Lady Day one thousand seven hundred and eighteen, and ye other Sixty Pounds at Lady day one thousand seven hundred and nineteen. Provided always and it is ye true intent & meaning hereof that ye sd Wm Levingstone & His assigns shall be and are truly obliged to abate and deduct out of ye sd respective yearly payments after ye rate of five pounds Curr money for each month which ye sd Charles Stagg shall be diverted from teaching to dance in consideration of his ye sd Charles Stagg being employed in ye preparation and acting of Play for ye joint benefit of himself and ye sd Wm. Levingstone. And ye sd Charles Stagg doth further covenant and agree ti abd with ye sd William Levingstone that he ye sd Charles Stagg his Exec & Admrs shall and will within ye space of eighteen months next after ye ensealing of these presents well and truly content & Pay unto ye sd Wm Levingstone or his assigns ye sum of thirty-five pounds seventeen shillings which is in full of all charges & Expenses which ye sd Wm Levingstone hath been at for horses, ferriages, or otherways for ye greater convenience of ye sd Charles Stagg in attending at ye respective places where he teaches to dance at any time heretofore and also of all such sums of money as ye sd Wm. Levingstone hath advanced to ye sd Charles Stagg or his wife either in species or in goods and Merchandise since ye sd Staggs arrival in Virginia. And it is further covenanted agreed between ye sd parties in manner and form following, that is to say, that ye sd William Levingstone & Charles Stagg shall with all convenient speed after ye ensealing of these Presents use their best endeavor to obtain a Patent or a Lychense from ye Governour of Virginia for ye sole privilege of Acting Comedies, Drolls or other kind of stage plays within any part of ye sd Colony not only for ye three years next ensueing ye date hereof but for as much longer time as ye sd Governour shall be pleased to grant ye same for ye joint benefit of ye sd Wm Levingstone or Charles Stagg or their assigns & neither of ye sd parties shall accept of or use such lychense without assuming ye other as partner in manner aforesaid. And ye sd Charles Stagg & Mary his wife do hereby covenant and promise that they ye sd Charles Stagg & Mary shall not only act in ye stage plays (Sickness and other reasonable ----- excepted) but shall also use their best endeavors to teach and influence others in ye way and manner of Acting according to ye best of their skill as well for ye three years next ensueing ye date hereof for such further and longer time as they ye sd Charles Stagg & Mary his wife or either of them shall stay in Virginia. And moreover that neither ye sd Charles Staff or Mary his wife shall Act any Play within ye sd Colony of Virginia without ye consent of ye sd Wm Levingstone or his assigns during ye sd term of three years next ensueing ye date hereof, nor at any time thereafter in case no Patent or Lychense be obtained from ye Governour in Manner aforesaid. And if ye sd Charles Stagg or Mary his wife shall at any time Act with ye consent of ye sd Wm. Levingstone or his assigns, he ye sd Levingstone shall have and receive one-half of all the profits arising by such Plays, he or they bearing one half of ye charges accruing thereon in manner hereafter mentioned. And ye sd Wm. Levingstone dothe further covenant and agree with all convenient speed to cause to be erected and built at his own proper cost and charges in ye City of Williamsburgh one good substantial house commodious for acting such plays as shall be thought fitt to be acted there. And it is further covenanted and agreed by and between ye sd parties that ye sd Wm. Levingstone and Charles Stagg shall bear and equal share in all charges of cloathes, musick and other necessities required for acting sd plays (ye rent of ye playhouse at Williamsburg only excepted which is declared as aforesaid to be ye proper charge of ye sd Wm. Levingstone) and shall also have received and enjoy an equal share of ye profits arising thereby. And for as much as ye sd Wm. Levingstone hath at his own proper cost and charge sent to England for actors and musicians for ye better performance of ye sd plays, it is hereby covenanted and agreed by and between ye sd parties to these presents that ye money arising by ye sd plays ye same allowance shall be made both for ye musicians and actors as others equally qualified hired here in Virginia shall or ought to receive by ye day or other ways. And lastly ye sd parties do hereby mutually bind and oblige themselves, their heirs, Exec and Admrs respectively ye one to ye other for ye true performance of all and singular the Articles hereinbefore mentioned so far as they severally relate to themselves whilst married or if ye sd Mary becomes a widow in ye penal sum of five hundred pounds to be paid by ye party failing his heirs, Exec & Admrs to ye party performing or willing to perform his part of ye promises and to ye Exec Admrs and Assigns of ye party so performing. In witness whereof ye parties to these Presents have hereunto interchangeably let their hands & seals ye day and year first above written.

Charles Stagg (Seal)

Mary Stagg (Seal)

Admitted to record

Nov. 19, 1716

Wit. Will Robertson